

**White House Conference on Cooperative Conservation
Day 2 Breakout Session Compilation**

Topic: Building Successful Partnerships

Session number: 45

Facilitator: Linda Kucera

Afternoon

Location: 124

- A. Major Repeated Themes Raised in the Discussion.** *A grouping of ideas repeated with some frequency in the session and brought up again during the group summation process. Also includes diverging views and/or questions about the topic.*

Recurring themes involved trust, voluntary participation, having a champion, money, flexibility, and getting the right people at the table.

Additional items raised in the discussion:

Learn how to deal with disagreement so it doesn't destroy the partnership.

A crisis can create shared needs or interests- a sense of urgency.

Agencies must have a reasonable willingness to compromise. Giving way may pave the way for something bigger.

Agencies must have reasonable expectations in terms of time, money, and people's efforts.

The nickels and dimes of small pots of money add – they can be used to leverage, leverage, leverage.

We should celebrate success as we go along.

“Co-creating” work in looking for new, innovative ideas is productive. Instead of one partner with ideas looking for other partners, all agencies should work on partnering ideas.

- B. National-level Practical Actions** *that could be taken by the Federal government, national NGO's, and other national organizations. Diverging views and/or questions are also noted.*

Reconcile or harmonize Federal laws and regulations that conflict with state laws and regulations.

Reconcile or harmonize different and conflicting approaches and agendas among Federal agencies.

Reduce transaction costs for receiving federal funds.

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Reorient the NRCS approach to include partner projects as well as individual landowners.

Modernize and update ESA and NEPA to recognize cooperative conservation partnerships under law.

Provide Presidential or CEQ recognition of local partnerships annually, such as with a ceremony at the rose garden.

Change agency cultures by getting decision makers in the field, empowering them to partner, taking an entrepreneurial approach, and reducing turf mentality.

Walk the talk, i.e. be more inclusive more often.

Improve the marketing of opportunities to partner with the Federal government and market the successes. Seek third party validation of successes.

CEQ and the President must enforce (“lay down the law”) that we will practice cooperative conservation.

The President needs to be more vocal in support of partnering.

Create “strike teams” consisting of one person from each agency to work with partners to remove obstacles and solve problems.

C. **Local-level Practical Actions** *that could be taken at the local or community level by Tribes, state and local communities, private citizens, and local organizations. Diverging views and/or questions are also noted.*

-Create umbrella coordinating organizations to eliminate duplication of effort and create synergies.

-Look for and recruit Federal partners.

-Bring Federal and state decision makers on site to your project.

-Go to Washington D.C. and tell them what you think.

-Work with the press to get your message out.

-Get younger people and different people involved and really listen to their ideas.

-Periodically do a progress check as part of monitoring and measuring success.

D. **Particularly insightful quotes from participants** that capture the essence of key points made during the group’s discussion.

None

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Topic: **Building Successful Partnerships**

Session Number: **45**

Facilitator: **Robin Roberts**

Afternoon

Location : **RM 125**

A. Major Repeated Themes Raised in the Discussion

- Build relationships around common goals – this will allow trust to build.
- Clearly lay out roles, responsibilities and expectations
 - everybody should know what it is expected of them, what others can contribute, and ensure that actions aren't redundant.
- Rules of conduct are essential.
- Good partnerships cannot be forced.
- All players need to realize that their individual goals can best be met by being at the table, and moving with a group.
- Strong leadership is essential to allow for full communication and trust
- Shares leadership and knowledge, speaks all languages, sense of humor, thick skin, a respected diplomat
- Divergence – some view partnership as a means to a long-term relationship, while others view partnership as a means to conflict resolution
- The Federal government is organized in a non-intuitive manner, and working with them can be cumbersome and convoluted.
- Funding would work best in for multiple years – prioritizing und distribution to those with proven track records.

B. National-level Practical Actions

- Establish long term funding programs (5 years or more), as
- Often one-year funding going away leads to the partnerships going away
 - A lot of energy is spent in obtaining grants on an annual basis (both for staff and for volunteers)
 - Partnerships with a long term, good track record, need to be endorsed through prioritized, long term funding
- Let's not forget we also need to continue to be building capacity for partnerships; for these groups – let's first fund them for developing some strategic similar type plan.
- Streamline requirements for comprehensive/strategic/community plans – so that all federal entities have the same requirements and one plan can be developed to meet all agency needs
- The Federal Government agencies need to do a strategic plan to clarify, streamline and improve its communications amongst and within agencies
- Define what cooperative conservation means commonly across the federal sector, and then develop the appropriate set of tools that provide all of the information public needs.

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- Develop one guide that clearly states what folks need to do to partner with federal agencies.
 - We almost need a Presidential mandate to fully implement (streamline horizontally and vertically) cooperative conservation.
 - Realize that often it's the local community or state level folks that are doing the work – so feds – hand out the funds and get out of the way.
 - Instill the partnership value in the federal culture
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- Reinstate excellent, “tried and true” programs that have a long-term record of success
 - USDA FS “Economic Action Programs” particularly ‘Economic Recovery Grant’
 - Fully fund the land and water conservation fund.
 - Create incentive programs (similar to that of CREP) that force you to look beyond just the landowner to consult and achieve goals.
 - Move away from economic indicators such as ‘new home starts’ that are really just indicators of urban sprawl

C. Local-level Practical Actions

- Report upward when programs are really working.
- Private and non-profits could focus on establishing the connection between urban dwellers and where the need for conservation.
- Be at the table to plan actions and include the conservation focus.
- Private and NGO's should focus energy on conservation education in the schools.
- Build on the successes of short term projects.
- Partner with other local entities to strengthen local entities
- Work across political and economic boundaries.

D. Particularly Insightful Quotes

“Partnership is a way of life for us.”

“Steer from behind.”

“When it's all said and done, the people say ‘We did it ourselves’”.

“Sometimes the best partnerships are born in separate rooms.”

“Odd that we've got the Department of Defense here, but where's the Department of Energy? That's where we have our largest conservation need.”

“Collaboration costs.”

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**White House Conference on Cooperative Conservation
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Topic: Building Successful partnerships

Session number: 45

Facilitator: Carl Moore

Afternoon

Location: 126

- A. Major Repeated Themes Raised in the Discussion.** *A grouping of ideas repeated with some frequency in the session and brought up again during the group summation process. Also includes diverging views and/or questions about the topic.*

The group agreed that there are certain critical factors that are essential to partnerships:

1. trust (including willingness to take risk)
2. openness/willingness to listen
3. inclusiveness
4. communication
5. catalyst/problem e.g. mutual self interest, commitment
6. quality leadership

- B. National-level Practical Actions** *that could be taken by the Federal government, national NGO's, and other national organizations. Diverging views and/or questions are also noted.*

- A national conservation policy promoting cooperative conservation would assess and report on the scope and success of such efforts thus far. This would be a state of the nation's cooperative conservation. The policy would identify gaps, areas unaddressed by existing cooperative conservation efforts and the limits of cooperative conservation. Then the policy would explore and encourage efforts to transcend those limits and find ways to apply cooperative conservation to problems in areas and on scales not yet addressed. This would include enabling agencies to work more easily with each other, enable and facilitate planning across political jurisdictions, and span ecosystems and cultural contexts.
- Public Sector Roles:
 - o use the availability of funds to drive certain actions that lead to desirable conservation outcomes
 - o partner with local groups to achieve specific desirable ends
 - o technical/scientific advice
 - o initiate projects
 - o implementation of projects
 - o setting standards and monitoring
- Recognize and fund the cost of collaboration, including technical and training and development costs. Collaboration is not necessarily going to result in spending less federal dollars but it will ensure spending federal dollars more wisely.

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- Create incentives for funds, recognition, and employee ...
- Engage in outcome-based partnerships. Set standards and monitor partnerships.
- Include criteria in national resource allocation and authorizations that would make clear that partnership activities are not subject to FACA and that would provide for community design.

C. Local-level Practical Actions *that could be taken at the local or community level by Tribes, state and local communities, private citizens, and local organizations. Diverging views and/or questions are also noted.*

- Private Sector Roles:
 - o Technical/scientific advice
 - o Understanding the local community
 - o Initiate projects
 - o Implementation of projects
 - o Communicating success to/educate Congress
 - o Private sector funds
 - o setting standards and monitoring
- Academia Roles:
 - o Technical/scientific advice
 - o Academia can be active partners
 - o setting standards and monitoring
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D. Particularly insightful quotes from participants *that capture the essence of key points made during the group's discussion.*

N/A

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**White House Conference on Cooperative Conservation
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Topic: Building Successful partnerships

Session number: 45

Facilitator: Paul De Morgan

Afternoon

Location: 127

A. Major Repeated Themes Raised in the Discussion. *A grouping of ideas repeated with some frequency in the session and brought up again during the group summation process. Also includes diverging views and/or questions about the topic.*

1. Fund partnership infrastructure (coordination, facilitation, travel, etc.) to allow for creativity and flexibility (then don't need to rely completely on volunteers).
2. Set measurable outcomes when building partnership.
3. Identify short-term achievable objectives to ensure early success.
4. Who plays what roles will be dependent on the type of issue; flexibility is more important than dictating specific roles for specific interests.
5. Forming partnerships when there isn't a crisis can lay the groundwork for addressing future challenges; however, in reality, it is a significant challenge to get participants interested.
6. To keep partnerships sustainable you need successful results and to address broad based issues and interests.

B. National-level Practical Actions *that could be taken by the Federal government, national NGO's, and other national organizations. Diverging views and/or questions are also noted.*

7. Have environmental fines go towards cooperative conservation efforts in the form of a cooperative conservation fund.
8. Identify and eliminate Federal barriers to allow easier movement of money to non-profits which allows for increased partnership flexibility and results in incentives
9. Develop Federal programs that give grants for collaborative processes (not just projects).
10. Need Federal agency support (funding) from the top and the appropriate structure to support on the ground efforts (e.g., partnership specialists and partnership offices).
11. Clearly identify funding sources for conservation partnerships.
12. Explore authorities for cooperative conservation in each agency.
13. Have national environmental policy as the means to exceed environmental standards.
14. There is a need for cultural change in federal agencies and national organizations.

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15. Need agency leadership to direct that if there is a choice between a regulatory or cooperative approach, allow the more flexible approach to be chosen. This needs to be consistent within and among agencies.
16. Develop and use a coordinated and streamlined permit application process.

C. Local-level Practical Actions *that could be taken at the local or community level by Tribes, state and local communities, private citizens, and local organizations. Diverging views and/or questions are also noted.*

17. Identify funding sources for conservation partnerships.
18. Explore state authorities for cooperative conservation.
19. Remove disincentives and identify incentives for landowner participation.
20. Develop and use a coordinated and streamlined permit application process.
21. Create an atmosphere that encourages tribal participation.
22. Recognize the need for cultural change within state agencies.

D. Particularly insightful quotes from participants *that capture the essence of key points made during the group's discussion.*

23. Seek first to understand.
24. Each of us has a personal responsibility to understand where the other stakeholders are coming from.

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